

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING

Minutes

November 17, 2016

Commission Members Present:

Bianca Chang
Peter Hwang
Joan Hash
Reverend Turner
Ilene Kessler
Shiraz Ahmed
Frank Eastham

Commission Members Absent:

Opel T. Jones, I
Ivette Lopez
Misbah Farooqi

Staff:

Dr. Barbara J. Sands, HRC Executive Secretary
Stephanie Chapple, HRC Recording Secretary
Melissa Goldmeier, HRC Legal Counsel

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 7:08 p.m.

2. PUBLIC FORUM – N/A

3. HRC CASES UPDATE – LEGAL COUNSEL – Appeal was denied for HRC Case No. 16-09-009

4. APPROVE MINUTES

October meeting minutes approved.

8. CHAIR'S REPORT – Reverend Turner thanked all Committee Chairs who turned in their reports prior to the meeting. Commissioners are encouraged to please submit typed, hard-copy reports to Stephanie no later than the Monday before the meeting. Four pending tasks need to be completed per the Chair's Report.

- Dr. Sands will draft a letter on behalf of the HRC in support of the LGBT community, as a follow-up to the shooting at a nightclub in Florida.
- HRC members will determine a public service project to assist in the recovery efforts for Ellicott City. Dr. Sands will forward information on what the current needs are & forward to members. Reverend Turner & Dr. Sands will talk further next week.
- Donations for supplies needed for KITS for Human Trafficking victims will be collected at the December meeting. Stephanie will send a reminder notice, along with a list of supplies via email. Shiraz will bring a number of KITS already prepared.
- Bianca will discuss status of calendar, which will include dates of upcoming trainings, seminars, and workshops, during the December meeting.
- When community concerns and situations arise that affect Howard County citizens, a letter or statement should be drafted on behalf of the HRC to express support, concern, or opposition, based on the issue. The Chair of the Commission, or a Committee Chair can draft the correspondence as it relates to the subject matter.

Reverend Turner thanked everyone who attended the Holland dinner.

5. COMMITTEES/ REPORTS

- Finance & Fair Lending with Housing – *Ilene, Ivette, Joan* - Ilene submitted a hard copy of report. Ilene will attend workshops in December with Realtors. Workshops will cover information on Freddie Mac & Fannie Mae mortgage loans, predatory lending, and the real estate market as it relates to home ownership, as well as, effects from the election, if any.
- Legislation – *Ivette* – No report
- Education, Public Safety and Student Life Committee – *Frank, Reverend Turner, Opel, Ivette* – Reverend Turner submitted a hard copy report. Per Frank, the HCPSS Committee for Diversity and Inclusion Committee submitted 80 unedited recommendations to the Board of Education. Twenty of those recommendations are being acted upon now through various offices, and the Office of Human Resources. The 4 focus groups for this committee were: Curriculum, Student Voice, Professional Learning, and Human Resources. Per Reverend Turner, the African-American Community Roundtable met with Chief Gardner to plan a program to focus on education, opportunity, and strengthening relationships with young people in Columbia. The status of that report will be shared during the December meeting. St. John Baptist Church will hold a student gathering on 11/18 to allow students to express their feelings, concerns, and issues regarding everything going on in their school, community, and in the aftermath following the elections. Frank commented that situations going on with student comments and posts on social media aren't necessarily a result of the

election, it merely exposed what was already in our community. Thought questions were asked “how can we change the mindset of our community?” Members agreed “this is a shared responsibility which takes active involvement from parents, family members, the school system, the Commissioners, and the overall community.” Frank shared success stories from the **Voices for An Inclusive Community** program held at Long Reach High School. This program was co-sponsored with the Office of Human Rights & the HCPD. 200+ participants actively engaged in table discussions, Q & A, etc. This is an ongoing program – the next program will be held in late January or early February.

- HRC Awards Committee – *Bianca & Opel* – Bianca thanked Stephanie for her assistance in finalizing contract, etc. Nomination form is posted online. Please visit the Office of Human Rights website, under the link “Forms.” Please consider nominating someone in your community, or an organization that you feel should be considered to receive the 2017 Human Rights award. Additionally, please circulate the link or form within your professional networks, community groups, faith-based organizations, neighbors, etc.
- Human Trafficking Committee – Peter, Shiraz and Joan – Committee met to determine 3 short-term goals:
 - (1) Set up meeting with Dr. Sands to get complete briefing of everything she is aware of that is taking place within the county to support victims, assist law enforcement, etc.
 - (2) Contact various agencies and non-profit organizations, and request to be added to their list serves, etc. share details on what the committee’s primary goals and initiatives are in combating this heinous county and statewide form of slavery.
 - (3) Gain knowledge and understanding from law enforcement and agencies directly involved in assisting victims of Human Trafficking to determine what the needs are within the community.
 - Committee members met with Chief Gardner to express the importance of why this committee was formed, & offered their support and involvement as this is a primary focus of the HRC. Committee members can make a great impact by writing a letter to the County Council expressing the importance of passing legislation being presented within the coming weeks. Legislation will be presented to pass regulations that will assist law enforcement (HCPD) to go in and inspect what they believe are suspicious activities with massage parlors.
 - The committee will draft a letter on behalf of the HRC, and present it to the entire body in December.
- LGBTQ Committee – *Opel* – No report.
- Aging, Disability and Health Care Committee – *Bianca* – Hard copy of report submitted.
- HRC Goals Committee – Peter, Bianca, Rev. Turner – committee members are requesting a meeting with David Lee in January to discuss how the County can resource HRC’s efforts to have a more interactive website, and utilize technology to educate and engage the community regarding human rights issues.
- Ad-Hoc Committee/Nominating Committee – Shiraz, Peter, Joan – Committee members will solicit names for possible candidates to be interviewed for upcoming HRC open positions. Committee members also spoke to David Lee to reiterate process regarding window timeframe for interviews, deadlines for submissions, etc. Name(s) of HRC’s preferred candidate will be sent to the County Executive’s Office in early January. Chair Turner is comfortable with Nominating Committee members vetting candidate(s). Reverend Turner’s only request is that the committee draft an executive summary to the Chair and members indicating what name(s) have been forwarded to the County Executive for consideration, and why.

6. STUDENT REPORT – No report

7. STAFF REPORT/UPDATES – Please see written report from Dr. Sands. Additionally, Dr. Sands is working with state officials on legislation for Transgender citizens as a protected class. Currently, Howard County is the only county where transgender citizens are a protected class.

9. NEW BUSINESS – N/A

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS/UPDATES –

11. ADJOURNMENT – Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.